

**Testimony of Bob Cameron
Marylyn Tree LLC
DC State Board of Education
March 16, 2011**

Good evening, my name is Bob Cameron, I am here this evening in my capacity as a business owner in Ward 5 to discuss a serious problem in our community concerning the education of some of our most vulnerable citizens, our young children.

The business I represent is called Marylyn Tree, LLC. We own a property at 2229 M Street, NE, which is located in the Carver Terrace section of Ward 5. This property is leased to Nations Capitol Child and Family Development (NCCFD), which is operated by Travis Hardmon. This once prestigious organization used to operate 25 early childhood development centers but is now down to only one. That one is housed in our property. This size reduction happened under Mr. Hardmon's leadership and mismanagement which includes the criminal activities that we have uncovered.

Let me list a few issues as it relates to Mr. Hardmon:

- 1) Mr. Hardmon admits through the NCCFD bankruptcy filing that he now owes the Federal Government more than \$4 million dollars in back taxes - that is mostly payroll taxes he was a fiduciary for.
- 2) In the same bankruptcy filing he admits to owing the DC Government hundreds of thousands in back taxes including a large amount in payroll taxes. How can OSSE continue to fund a business that is not in compliance with the basic DC employment requirements?
- 3) I want to tell the board that this building was remodeled from the bottom up in 1998 to be a first class care center. More than \$3 Million was spent at that time. We are very concerned that Mr. Hardmon has not been keeping the building up to the top level that we expected. OSSE paid him well to keep our building up. We can't get into the building to truly inspect it until Hardmon is out. We have our concerns and those concerns extend to the question of safety for the kids and teachers using the building. It could be nothing or it could be a huge issue. We just don't know. My day job is as a public school teacher. I am concerned.
- 4) Mr. Hardmon has a history of not paying his employees. This has had a revolving door effect. That does not provide continuity of care for the families he serves. I have included a letter from a former employee attesting to this and some of the other issues that I have raised.
- 5) Mr. Hardmon has forged invoices using fake Marylyn Tree letterhead to get reimbursements from OSSE for building repairs that were not done and not needed to be done at that time. An OSSE employee Ellen Fatah, was questioned about this in court and basically said that OSSE had no concern about this. We can provide a transcript if you like. Fraud at any level or degree should always be a concern.

There are many more issues I could raise. However, the few I have listed are enough to merit the attention of this Board and more importantly OSSE. We have raised and presented these concerns to OSSE for the past two years and as recently as last month. Nothing has been done. Doing nothing is tragic.

You should know, that we will continue to raise these issues to any and everyone who will listen until Mr. Hardmon and NCCFD are no longer funded and are removed from our building. There are other really good care providers that can easily replace him. Our first class childhood development care building deserves the best. Our children deserve the best. It is time to do more than nothing. It is time to move forward.

Thank you.